

Congressman Continues Call for Additional Reforms to Reduce Prescription Drug Costs

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today reported that 175,000 New Yorkers who participate in the Medicare Part D program saved an average of \$650 this year on prescription drugs as a direct result of the health care law he helped pass last year. The law provides a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs to Part D participants who fall into the coverage gap known as the donut hole. The health care law, also known as the Affordable Care Act, has also provided free preventive care to over 1.4 million New Yorkers who are enrolled in the Medicare Part D program.

"One of the biggest problems with the Bush administration's prescription drug plan is that it created a huge coverage gap known as the donut hole," said Hinchey. "The reforms I voted for last year are closing that gap over time, and this year alone 175,000 New Yorkers are saving an average of \$650. The reforms also eliminated co-pays and fees for preventive services, helping 1.4 million Medicare participants in New York. These are big steps in the right direction, but now we have to continue moving forward. I'm continuing to fight to end the ban that prohibits the federal government from negotiating bulk rate discounts on prescriptions purchased through Medicare Part D. Doing so would save \$156 billion over 10 years, helping to preserve Medicare over the long run."

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), 2.65 million people nationwide with Medicare have saved more than \$1.5 billion on their prescriptions. As of the end of November, more than 24.2 million people with Medicare have taken advantage of at least one free preventive benefit – including the new Annual Wellness Visit – made possible by the Affordable Care Act.

Hinchey voted to pass the Affordable Care Act, noting that the bill was not perfect and would require substantial improvements. Hinchey has targeted several areas where the Affordable Care law could be improved to further lower costs and improve the system as a whole. In addition to calling for the negotiation of prescription drug rates through Medicare Part D, the congressman has also cited a need for an expedited timeframe with regard to provisions that create greater choice and competition and noted his continued support for a public option that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says would further reduce costs.